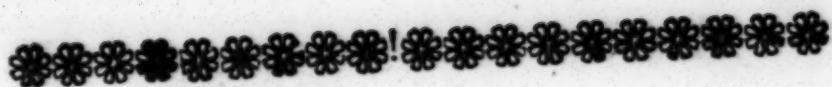
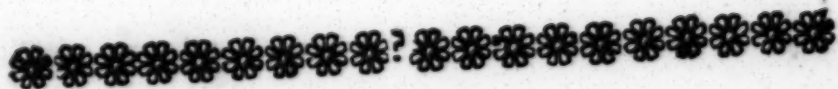
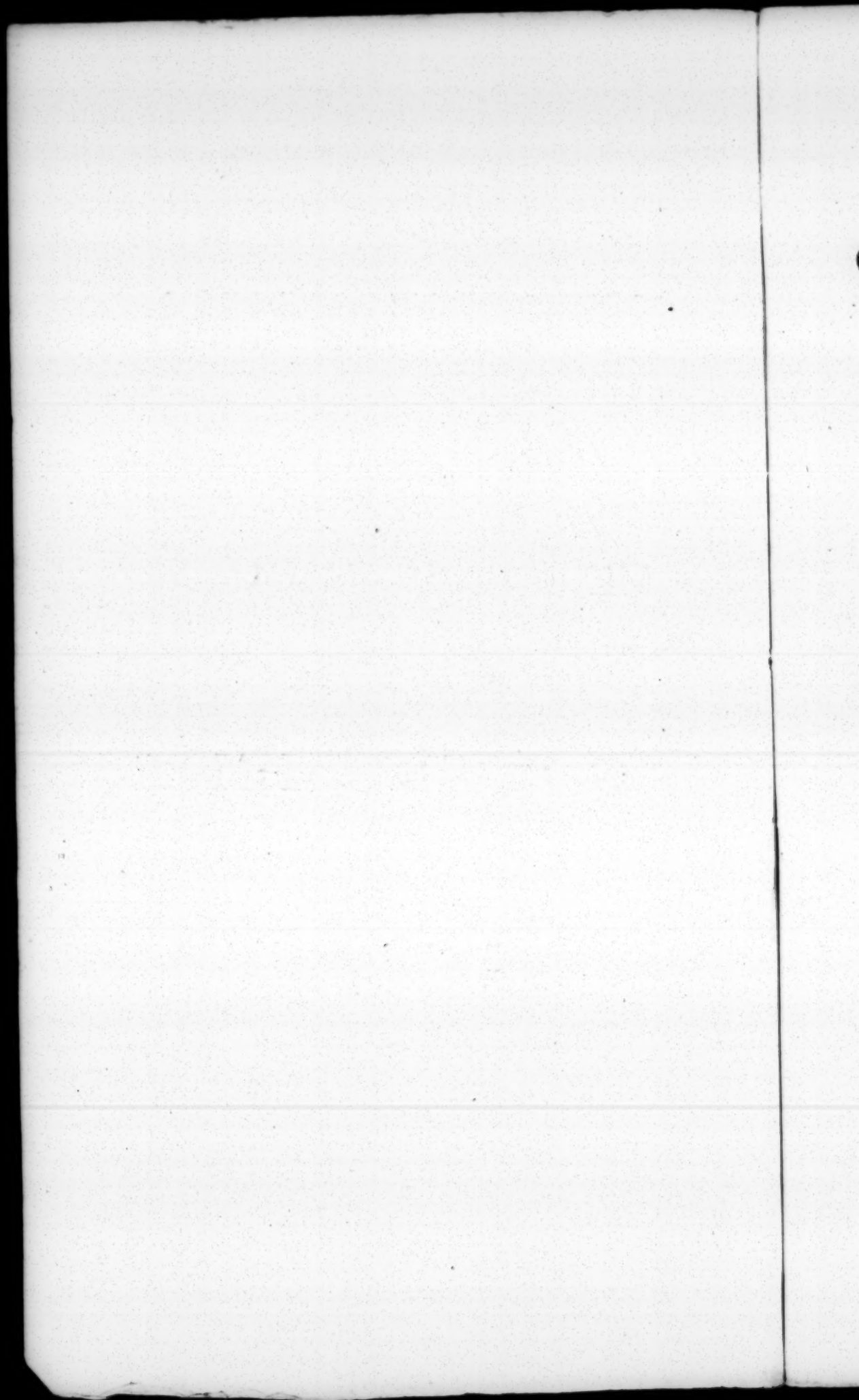


Chenka



S O M E
GENERAL THOUGHTS
O N
GOVERNMENT.





✓
S O M E

GENERAL THOUGHTS

O N

GOVERNMENT,

And particularly on the

Present State of Affairs.



13.

L O N D O N :

Printed for M. COOPER, in *Paternoster-Row*, 1757.





S O M E

General Thoughts, &c.

IF Indignation could make a Poet, as *Juvenal* said, I think, with much more Reason, it ought to make a Writer. Things are come to such a Crisis, that I am sure, it requires both our Hearts and Heads to mend them. I mean clear Heads and honest Hearts.

When I was both at School and the University, I was taught, and learnt and believed, that none but Scholars, or at least those who had travelled, and learnt the Customs of other Nations besides their own,

B

were

were fit to make Statesmen and Politicians : I believe *Plato*, and *Aristotle*, and *Solon*, and all the great Statesmen and Philosophers of former Times, thought so. But, it seems, I was mistaken ; for now-a-days, the System of Politicks is so wholly changed, that every ambitious Man who can get into a certain Post, and be in possession of the T—y and E —, (for what Uses I won't say) thinks himself an able Statesman, and a consummate Politician.

The Case was not so in Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign. For none but very able Men and Scholars were preferred by her : And they, in return, made her Reign very glorious.

The Question is not now, whether the Nation be corrupt ; I believe that is a Point given up : The Business is not now to rail, but to mend.

As Rectitude of Manners, Integrity, and Love for our Country, build up, and form, and strengthen States, and Kingdoms, and Empires : So, it is plainly proved, and appears from History, that the
 1 contrary

contrary Qualities pull them down and destroy them.

There is nothing I dread so much as the Ruin, nay the Decay of my Country.

I know there is a certain Acme, or Degree of Perfection, in all States, as there is in human Bodies, beyond which nothing can pass. You may, by proper Regimen, continue long in that State : Are we come to that Degree, or are we past it ? If we are past it, let us let ourselves down as gently as we can.

I believe rather we are arrived at it ; for I don't know when *England* enjoyed better Days, or more Freedom. Let Malecontents say what they will, History will do Justice to the present Royal Family, to the two last Reigns. And for the Truth of the Comparison, I appeal to the past Histories of Royal Families.

If then we are arrived to this Pitch, let us have a care of a Repletion, or Plethora, which is generally the Case of all flourishing Constitutions. I am afraid that is our Case. And if I was not afraid of appear-

ing too religious in this Libertine Age, I would say that Pride and Fulness of Bread, &c. were in us.

What then must be done? The Body Politick is like the Body Natural. We must use Evacuations, either bleed, or purge, or live upon a lower Diet. Can we submit to live upon a lower Diet? Can we who have been used to high Soups, and rich Broths, live upon Water Gruel? Can we forego our Pleasures and live at home? Can we give up our favourite Diversions, our innocent Routs, and more innocent Masquerades, and take care of our Families? Alas, I am hideous, a Fool, and ill-bred for thinking so. Can we go plainer in Cloaths, and lay by our Laces, our rich Liveries, and Equipages? If we can't do this, and a great deal more, towards a Reformation, it is plain, we can't conform to live upon a lower Diet.

The raging Passion of this Age, is the Love of Pleasure, in its worst Sense. This Love of Pleasure, or Luxury, call it which you will, proceeds from Plenty. Infidelity
proceeds

proceeds from Luxury ; for did we believe, or believe sincerely, we should not be entirely profligate. But we endeavour to do all in our Power to disbelieve ; so we commence Infidels ; so we come to laugh at all Religion, and would willingly dye in that Condition, but that Providence sometimes, in Mercy, sends a burning Fever, or some other salutary Distemper, to awaken the lethargick Infidel.

If we can't then submit to a proper Regimen, we must bleed, or purge, or use some other Evacuations. I recommend first, vomiting or purging ; bleeding, and perhaps Amputation, last. By vomiting and purging, I mean Acts of Resumption, squeezing of Spunges, sweating an over-grown corpulent Estate, which has fed illegally on the Entrails of the Government, without ever giving an Account. Reversing Reversions, and going to the Bottom in Enquiries. In short, tapping, or doing any thing to discharge the Humours of an over-grown, dropfical, sickly, consumptive Body.

In

In a Word, if we do not submit to a Reformation, it is the Opinion of most (may Providence avert the Prediction) that we shall be forced to one, or a Dissolution.

I am no Seer or Prophet; but no Man can help foreseeing Events in the natural course of Things, and conjecturing from what has been, what may be.

I come now to bleeding, as one of the last Remedies in our Power, generally successful, though often unwillingly submitted to. For Amputation, if ever it comes to that, I am afraid, will be the Work of others.

I was always sorry, if so low a Creature may say so, for this War. For all Wars are Scourges, and certain Indications of God's Wrath. And I always thought (with Submission to my Superiors) that the manner of entering into it was mean, below the Heroism of his Majesty and Family, and Dignity of the Nation. I can never believe it the Impulse or Suggestion of an Hero.

On the one hand, we are constantly reproached by the *French* King, of beginning the

the War like Pirates ; and on the other, blamed and upbraided by the neighbouring Nations, of bringing the War into *Europe*. I ask, as Politicians, had we not better have kept the War in that Part of the World where the Grievance began : So the *French* would have been the Aggressors, and we the Defenders ; so we should have had Justice on our Side.

Whereas, by taking their Ships without a Declaration of War, we are the Aggressors in *Europe*, and they the Defenders. Nothing has succeeded hitherto. Providence seems to declare the Justice on their Side. Besides, where was the Policy of beginning a Privateering War, when we stake, at least, Three to One !

I resume the Argument. Now we are entered into the War, if we can't have reasonable Terms, the Limits adjusted, and Boundaries settled, let us push on the War vigorously, and not do Things by Halves. I cannot see how we can expect honourable Terms as Aggressors, unless by honourable is meant, Terms which may save our Honour ;

Honour ; therefore let us be content with reasonable.

No War can be carried on without Money ; I should think it adviseable not to starve the Cause. I would not be supposed to advise unnecessary and extravagant Expences. But very often a vigorous Prosecution puts a speedy End to a War.

If we won't tax our Luxuries for the Sake of ourselves, and the Good of the Constitution, let us do it for the Sake of the War. In the End, it may do us all good. And, if we are impoverished a little, I see no Harm in it. All plethorick Bodies are the better for emptying.

We may easily spare the Money, if we will spare our Diversions. Either put down our Places of Pleasure, or tax them. Tax our Follies, our Pleasures, our Gaming, our Race-horses.

Put a Tax on our Gaming-houses, on our Play-houses (as I am informed the *French* King does), and all Houses of idle Resort and Entertainment.

But

But do not tax our Necessaries, or the Labours of the Poor. Tax the Houses where they encourage Cock-fighting, which is both a cruel Diversion, and a Pretence for Thieves and Gamblers to assemble.

Then after the War, if Providence pleases to put an happy End to it, take off the most burthensome Taxes; those especially the Poor feel most. Let always those continue which feed our Vices, and enervate our Minds.

The Distillery should be well looked to, and a Tax laid, or Methods found out, so as to amount to a total Prohibition of that execrable Liquor Gin; if we have a mind to preserve the remains of our enfeebled Poor.

How can all this be done without an Union among ourselves, especially our Ministry? And I hope and pray, not only for an Unity, but a Perpetuity of the same Ministry; that we may not be the standing Jest and perpetual Proverb of neighbouring Nations.

C

It

It is plain, while there are so many Intrigues and Contention about Places, the Good of the Publick may be the Pretence, but Ambition is the Root of the Quarrel.

In a Time of War especially, nothing can be more absurd than to be divided. How can an House stand that is at Variance within itself? Surely the Animosities of great Men should be laid aside at that Time. The Story of *Themistocles* and *Aristides* is well known. How can the Body thrive, nay, indeed, long exist, when the Head is out of Order!

I believe it is nothing to any impartial or unbyassed Person, a true Lover of his Country, who are the Ministers. Only we wish they may be honest; wish they may be able. But it is very much the Interest of those Ministers, to be popular, which they may easily be, by pursuing such Measures only, as are for the Publick Good.

Monopolies of all Kinds, at present known by the Name of Jobs, by all means
are

are to be avoided, upon any Emergency whatever. By Jobs, I mean a Combination, or Contract, of a few, to cheat the Publick.

Publick Offices should be well looked into and regulated. For we cannot suppose in a general Corruption, that they can escape the Contagion ; but that there is great Tyranny and Exaction practised upon the Subject, under the Name of Fees, or some Pretence or another.

The voluminous Body of Laws, or Acts of Parliament, or Statutes, called or distinguished by what Name you please, wants a thorough Revision and Abridgment ; and the iniquitous and dilatory Practices of the Courts of Law, cry out for an Amendment.

I have often thought the Law, as now managed, the greatest Burthen the Subject groans under, since the Tyranny of Popery has been removed. And, like that too, is oppressive, eats out our Substance, and calls aloud to Heaven for a Reformation.

I am sorry that any Clouds should happen in so good and just a Reign. Did great Men love the King as well as they do his Places, and their Country more than their own Advancement, they would study to make Him easy, and Us happy.

A Difunion among ourselves in the Beginning or Entrance into a War, is downright Madness ; I hope this Infatuation is not the Fore-runner of our Fall. *Quos Jupiter vult perdere, prius dementat.* Let us unite, and no body can break our Bundle of Arrows ; but if we separate them, they are easily broke.

I say then, instead of placing ourselves at the Meridian, or hoping that we may arrive still at a greater Degree of Perfection, may we not justly question, whether we are not past our Acme, and taking great Strides towards our Ruin ?

My Reasons for it, are these. In the first place, our extream and great Corruption of Morals ; which always preceded and predicted a Decay and Fall of Empire. In the next place, our excessive Luxury ; which
always

always brought on certain Ruin. Likewise our bare-faced, open and avowed Lewdness; and give me leave to add, in my Opinion, a Decay of Stile and Learning.

This perhaps may be my particular Opinion, and may perhaps startle some Authors, who are fond of their own Productions; for let the Cub be ever so ugly, the Mother Monkey will love it, and think it handsome.

I think our Stile by some has been so distorted, that I don't know whether I am reading *English* or *French*. Others, who perhaps look upon themselves as elegant and polite Writers, write meanly while they think they write easily. And when they endeavour to raise their Stile, perhaps in a pompous Description, or aim at the Sublime, they make use of Epithets to make out their Poverty of Genius: Which puts me in mind of Boys, who get upon Stilts to appear taller: Or like the *French*, who lard their Meat, to give the insipid Dish a Relish.

The Stile of another is very neat, but rather too quaint and smart for the Subject.

We

We have nevertheless, a few elegant Writers, neat and plain, in the best *Latin* and *Greek* Manner, who would shine in the best Ages of *Greece* and *Rome*.

Our Decay of Learning, I think, may be easily proved from this, that there are so few learned Books produced now among us. Our Genius is either enfeebled and decayed (or our Taste, with our Morals, corrupted) like a rich Soil whose Heart is worn out; instead of producing vigorous and good Corn, which affords strong Nourishment, we produce nothing but thistly Pamphlets and weedy Books of Entertainment.

I hope my Countrymen will forgive what I am going to say, as I think no Country or Men above Amendment or Advice. I would not have us think ourselves the wisest of Mankind, nay, indeed, very wise. My Reasons for it are these: Our Credulity and Changeableness, neither of which were ever esteemed the Marks or Attributes of Wisdom. We are too easy of Faith in every thing but Religion; which is the Reason we are such Dupes to so many Impostures.

I hope

I hope I shall be forgiven in speaking my Thoughts freely on Government, I declare I do it with Submission; and, at the same time, declare myself an Admirer of the best of Kings, and of the best, though most precarious, of Constitutions.

We should never send any two Commanders Abroad with equal Power, there being a certain Jealousy attending Command in all military Men; especially those of a different Element are not fond of one another.

The *Greek* Generals would never have conquered the *Persians* in that remarkable Sea-fight, if they had not commanded singly; for tho' they were ten, they took their Turns of Command each Day, singly, with absolute Power.

It is a common Notion, and, I believe, well founded, that *England* can never be ruined but by its Parliaments. By Parliament, I suppose, is meant, parliamentary Interest. And, if we do not change the manner of their septennial Continuance into a shorter Period, I am afraid the Constitution will be entirely broken: It sickens al-

ready by its long Duration. An ambitious Man, Prince, or Minister, may bring his Schemes to bear in seven Years, which he could not do in three or one.

The Governments, the most jealous of their Liberty, have always made their Magistracies of short Continuance. That Act, which made the Parliament sit seven Years, I am afraid, diminished the Royal Authority, and flung the Weight into the popular Scale: For if by one Act they can sit seven, why not by another sit longer? And so, by degrees, prolonging themselves, and finding the Sweets of Government, Security, and Perpetuity, become a Rump-parliament, and sit perpetual Dictators.

The passing that Act, which gave Liberty to our Men of War to take Merchant Ships, I believe has hurt the Fleet, and turned them Privateers.

Wise Men do not refuse Counsel from even an Enemy, nor abstain from following a good Example, though practised by a Foe.

The *French* King has led the Way, and shewed the Example. He has turned the
Pursuit

Pursuit of his Men of War into their true Channel, and pointed out to them the true Path to Glory and Reward ; by establishing a Reward for taking the Enemy's Ships of War.

Otherwise the Men of War are only Plunderers, and take an Advantage of a weak and unequal Foe to enrich themselves.

I wish the Militia Bill full Success in its Extent, if for our real future Good. I believe, and am sure, there is not an Individual who wishes better to his Country than I do. But, I am afraid, if these septennial Parliaments continue, while the Great and Rich find it so much their Interest to be chosen Members, they will bring by-and-by an armed Force into the Field, to maintain their Pretensions, and dispute their Elections, as the *Romans* did formerly, by dint of Arms, and breaking of Heads.

Give me leave, before I finish these Remarks, to answer an Objection I have heard publickly made, that we are not more luxurious than our Ancestors ; and they commonly alledge the Reign of King *Charles II.* as an Example. I believe I can prove it

D

from

from the following Considerations: Were there ever so many Vehicles of all Shapes and Denominations? Were there ever so many and such splendid Equipages? Were there ever so many Places of Diversion, a *Ranelagh*, *Vauxhall*, for the great, and Places of less Denomination for the inferior Quality? Were there ever so much masquerading? Such Routs? [Names unheard of before] Balls, Ridotto's, Musick Clubs? Was there ever such a Rage for Card-playing? I wish there was nothing more carried on in those numerous Assemblies, but the innocent Diversion of Cards! Were there ever, and would there then be, so many Elopements and Separations? Was there ever so much Drunkenness among the common People, and so much common Dishonesty amongst all People? Were there ever so many Songsters, both Men-fingers and Women-fingers, Fiddlers, Musicians of all kinds? In King *Charles's* Reign, at the Beginning of it, they had no Women upon the Stage, and Men acted the Female Parts: For the King coming early to the Playhouse, the Actors, to pacify and please the King, who
 loved

loved a Jest, desired his Majesty to have a little Patience, for the Queen was not ready, she was not quite shaved.

Was there ever so numerous a Nobility ! Lastly, there are now erecting, and have been, within these few Years, erected, more noble Palaces, and magnificent Villas, than used to be produced before in whole Centuries !

I humbly beg Pardon for any thing that may seem bold and presumptuous, which is advanced in this small Treatise, and few loose Thoughts. I declare upon my Word, they are my own ; genuine and sincere, proceeding from the Love of my Country, and the disagreeable Aspect of Affairs. I have read no Man's Works upon this Subject, for I suppose it would be compleater if I had. I only read a Quotation in a News-paper, where the Author talks of a certain neighbouring Nation, and accounts for their Manners. Which put me in mind of a Story I had read in *Plutarch* of *Annibal* ; who, upon his Flight from the *Romans* after his Defeat, coming into *Asia Minor*, in some City there, was desired to attend the Harangue of
a cer-

a certain great Orator ; who, for his Honour, had compos'd a Speech upon the Science and Art of War. The Speech was received with universal Applause by the Audience, and loud Acclamations ; when *Anni-bal* was asked his Opinion, who, like an honest Man and blunt Soldier, replied, he never heard a worse in all his Life, for the Man did not understand one Word of the Matter.

I believe there is little said here, which is not founded on History, and known Principles of Government, and preceding Facts. I am sure it proceeds from an honest Heart, and a sincere Desire of serving my Country, if I could. I offer my Mite, let abler Men fling in their Treasures into the Publick.

F I N I S.

